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WOMEN IN COMMUNIST CHINA

By Pai Ling
Wu Lien-ying

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WOMEN IN COMMUNIST CHINA

[The following are full translations of two articles
appearing in CHUNG-KUO FU-NU, Peiping, No 9, 1960,
pp 28-29, and p. 27.]

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THE EQUAL IMPORTANCE
OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

[The following is a full translation of an article by Pai Ling which appear in the Chung Kuo Fu Nu, Peiping, No. 9, 1960, pages 28 - 29.]

I am a salesgirl. I would like to express my views on the subject of discussion in the Chung Kuo Fu Nu recently "where does the real problem of Liu Su-o lie?".

I disagree with the charge of self-indulgence in family life levelled against her [Liu Su-o] - just as she said "work is important but the home has to be taken care of too." It is important to realize that a married woman comrade does face a multitude of practical problems. On this point, I myself understand only too well. My work enthusiasm was high before I was married; there was nothing to tie me down or to worry about so my energy for work was ample. But things have been different after I was married. I became pregnant and the side effects of pregnancy were such that I could neither eat nor sleep well. I was weak and worn-out physically so much so that at times it became necessary for me to ask for a leave of absence for a day or two to recuperate. My work enthusiasm faded. After this period was over, my body grew heavier and heavier. I had no desire nor energy to do anything. After the baby was born, there have been more problems to take care of - taking the baby to the nursing room, the

nursery, and preparing for every detail need of the baby - clothing, food, and diapers, etc. When the baby is sick, I become so pre-occupied that I can hardly concentrate on my work. To my way of thinking, this is a natural manifestation of motherly love for her young which is common to all and cannot be repudiated. From a rational standpoint, we must not let such distractions affect our work. But who does not wish to concentrate her efforts on her work and study? Only the objective realities are there, how could we refrain from dispersing a part of our energy?

I realize that married women cannot compare with single girls. It is to be expected that single girls give a better performance. Liu- Su-o, was she not an advanced production worker before her marriage; her work enthusiasm was high then. Could she have fallen back deliberately? I do not think so. It is the objective reality that has prevented her from devoting herself, single-heartedly, to her work. I think when her children are more grown, her household duties less numerous and burdensome, she will head forward and strive to catch up.

People often say "work first" this is correct in principle. But we must not over emphasize this aspect to the neglect of daily living. A happy family life encourages one to strive forward; the principal ingredient of a happy family life is the love between the husband and the wife. Liu Su-o was unwilling to work overtime at night, she wanted to arrange her holidays on Sundays so that she could be together with her husband; she worried about her husband being lonesome when he had to be home by

himself. To me, all of these are genuine manifestations of her love for her husband. Naturally, if one has to attend meetings and work overtime after an eight-hour day, how much time is there left to be together with her husband? In the long run, it is difficult not to cause some discontent on the part of her husband thus implanting seeds of discord between them. Therefore, the fact that Liu Su-o was unhappy because she could not often have Sundays together with her husband is understandable.

During the war, life for everybody was hard; it was unreasonable to stress our personal lives. But conditions are different now. Furthermore, one has to get married eventually and for married folks, ^{and} ~~who~~ do not wish to be together with her loved ones, and often ?

The collective body is formed by individuals and families. It is lopsided to stress only the benefits to revolution and to the collective body to the neglect of our personal life. It is not too much to ask for one to enjoy some happy moments with one's husband or wife and children after an eight-hour day at work; this is not indulgence in one's ~~own~~ little family circle. The ultimate goal of revolution is to realize a communistic society. The family is a product of society; even in a communistic society it will not disappear. Furthermore, the very purpose of the revolution is to make it possible for everyone to lead a happy and rewarding life. The family is the source of happiness. Ideal love and family are the most essential part in one's life. Therefore, I believe in the equal importance of work and family life.

PORTRAIT OF A MIAO GIRL MILITIA

Deputy Commander Wu Lien-ying
of Chia Mi Ta Tui, Hua Yuan Hsien,
Hunan Province.

[The following is a full translation of an article, unsigned, appearing in the Chung Kuo Fu Nu, Peiping, No.9, 1960, page 27]

It is March in Miao Chai. The spring air is filled with fragrance from the fields. Beyond the Chai, young Miao militia members are working, with high vigor and enthusiasm, on the irrigation project on the Hsiung Ti Ho. Young Miao men and women are known for their singing and dancing. With great cheer, they sing while they work. Among them is a young girl with dark but rosy complexion and two pigtaails. She works the hardest. Who is she? She is Wu Lien-ying, Deputy Commander of the First Girl Militia Brigade of Miao Chia.

In 1958, right after her graduation from primary school, sixteen-year old Wu Lien-ying was drawn to the great movement of production leap forward and communization. She resolved that she was to be a member of that first generation of educated farmers; she was to devote herself to the building of new Socialistic villages. When the communes initiated the militia movement, she was the first to join. As there is a common saying on the Chai "soldiering is man's business; a girl is busy with sewing and embroidery," her mother was displeased to learn about Lien-ying joining the militia. But she agreed to it when Lien-ying

explained to her clearly and in detail the importance and meaning of the militia movement.

After Lien-ying joined the militia, she actively mobilized the people around her to join the organization. In the fields and valley, the courtyards and streets, one could see Lien-ying working on the women folks. Following the method of a-key-to-each-lock, Lien-ying succeeded in urging 79 young women to register voluntarily for the militia within a few days. Lien-ying was unanimously chosen to be the Deputy Commander of the Girl Militia Brigade. Since then, a brilliant red Girl Militia Brigade flag has risen above the Miao Chai. This new organization, under the leadership of the Party, has displayed great capacity for production from the very beginning.

During the Spring Festival of 1959, Lien-ying requested and obtained some 20 mou of terraced land from the Party in ^{Ta Tui} ~~the brigade~~ to serve as high-yielding farms for the militia. With their careful planting and cultivation, rick tender sprouts covered the field. Just as harvest was drawing near, the area was devastated by a severe drought. Lien-ying 's heart was set afire as she watched the green sprouts withering away. What should she do ? Should she let nature take its own course ? At that time, the Party issued a call for " fight against the drought, wrest food from nature". Lien-ying conferred with Commander Yang Ming-hui. To lend firm support to the Party's call and to ensure a rich harvest for the whole brigade, they took initiative and suggested to the brigade Party branch:

send the militia brigade, in companies, to the various production teams to reinforce the leadership structure of the teams and inject new vitality to the fight against drought. Under the leadership of the militia, all members participate and worked actively in the great movement .

Lien-ying was with all the workers. They fought bitterly for 35 days and nights, opened up hills, and built an irrigation channel of over 10 li. Water was drawn from a stream to irrigate some 100 mou of fields. But the sun kept on scorching the land. In a few days, the stream ran dry. At that time, Lien-ying came up with another idea : mobilize the militia to carry water from wells two li away to water the fields. Thus, after endless efforts on the part of the militia and commune members, the fight against drought was won. Chia Mi Ta Tui still reaped a rich harvest.

In that winter, irrigation work on the Hsiung Ti Ho began. Lien-ying selected thirty-two strong girls from the militia to help on the job. Upon arrival Lien-ying and her sisters threw themselves to the laboring team. They initiated the high productivity competitive movement. Lien-ying's thirty-two girls formed the shock troop - not only they worked day and night but also came up with clever ideas to raise the efficiency of gravel and mud carrying. Lien-ying was so lost in her work that she even forgot about her own wedding date.

Lien-ying was in love with a young militia member Wu Shui-ch'ing for over a year. People all agreed that they were a perfect match. Her mother was especially pleased - she already

made many colorful skirts, dresses, and prepared dowry for Lien-ying. In line with traditional Miao custom, a propitious date for the wedding was chosen - the eighth of December. The day came but Lien-ying still was not home. Her mother sent word to the location of the project, still Lien-ying did not come back. Worried, she came to look for Lien-ying on location. Who would know that when Lien-ying saw her mother she softly explained: "mother, I know what is on your mind. It is all for my good. But," pointing to the sea of workers on the project, she said "look, how busy they are! I am engaged in organizing militia for shock-troop work. How can I come home to take care of my private affairs?" After this talk, her mother agreed that the wedding should be postponed to the Spring Festival.

Then came the Spring Festival. The entire militia suggested that they would spend the festival on the job in order to complete the repair work on the Hsiung Ti Ho irrigation project ahead of schedule. Lien-ying agreed to it whole-heartedly. But what about the wedding? If she went ahead with the wedding, she could not fulfill her duty. If she postponed the date again, the older generation in both families would be displeased with her, even Shui-ch'ing might think that she had changed her heart. Thinking the problem over many times, Lien-ying decided that fulfilling her duty would be more important and that the wedding had to be postponed once again. She hurried home to her mother first to convince her of this decision. Then, taking along the prize awarded to her by the command department of the irrigation project, Lien-ying went to the house of Sui-ch'ing to explain to him her thoughts. When she

found that his replies were not too straight forward, she put the prize on his chest and said : " I will not change my heart; this is my heart, Sui-ch'ing. Please be assured." Sui-ch'ing smiled.

The sun was rising from the east when Lien-ying hurried back to the project. The loudspeaker on location, once again, spread the word of Lien-ying's second postponement of her wedding.

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